

SECTION 0.0

PREFACE

What is architecture anyway? Is it the vast collection of the various buildings which have been built to please the varying taste of the various lords of mankind? I think not. No, I know that architecture is life: or at least it is life itself taking form and therefore, it is the truest record of life as it was lived in the world yesterday, as it is lived today, or ever will be lived. So architecture I know to be a great spirit. It can never be something which consists of the buildings which have been built by man on earth--mostly now rubbish heaps or soon to be. Architecture is that great living spirit which, from generation to generation, from age to age, proceeds, persists, creates, according to the nature of man and his circumstances. That is really architecture.

Frank Lloyd Wright
The London Lectures, 1939

There are few more clear examples of architecture as a "great living spirit" than the college or university. The architecture and the campus of academia are certainly among the "truest record[s] of life", and over time they become a powerful and tangible symbol of its "great living spirit".

The University of Houston is now eighty-nine years old. In that period of time it has become a strong living spirit within the spirited city whose name it bears. In that period of time the University has recorded its life in more than a hundred buildings on a wooded campus of more than 700 acres. Through the better part of a century the institution and its architects have done a good job of recording its life in a coherent, pleasant, and useful form that is fundamentally in accord with its original campus plan. This success has been largely through informal tradition and voluntary discipline. The University recognizes that in order to transmit the traditions of its campus plan and architecture into the future it is time to establish formal design guidelines and standards. These guidelines and standards will assure a harmonious campus while at the same time encouraging architectural innovation and quality construction.

As electronic technology becomes more and more a part of the learning endeavor, the "truest record" of the University's life, its campus and architecture, will become more and more important symbolically. This increased importance of the "place" of the University--of the "great living spirit" of the University--will necessitate even greater architecture. It is to the achievement of that greater architecture that this volume is directed.

Updated from the 2002 original written by Dave Irvin, AVC/AVP Plant Operations.